

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-11

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11
INRE-00 /065 W
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R 110809Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7965
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
USINT BAGHDAD
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
SECDEF WASHDC
DIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L DAMASCUS 2689

E.O. 11652: XGDS-4
TAGS: PINT, SY
SUBJ: SEALING OF SYRO-IRAQI BORDER LESS THAN AIRTIGHT

1. POLOFF HAD CHANCE MEETING WITH SHEIKH FARHAN LNU, SON
OF THE PARAMOUNT SHEIKH OF THE JABOUR TRIBE WHICH IS
PRINCIPALLY FOWYTFSBHUS\$T#
WASYRIA (THE JAZIRA) AND
NORTHWEST IRAQ. SHEIKH FARHAN SAID THAT HIS TRIBESMEN
CONTINUE TO CROSS THE SYRO-IRAQI BORDER AT WILL AND LITTLE,
IF ANY, ATTEMPT IS MADE TO INTERFERE WITH THEM. SHEIKH
FARHAN NOTED THAT HE COULD HAVE ANY OF FOUR OR FIVE ARAB
NATIONALITIES IF HE CHOSE, INCLUDEING JORDANIAN AND SAUDI.
(HE HAS SYRIAN NATIONALITY BUT SOME OF HIS FAMILY HAVE
SAUDI PASSPORTS.) SOME OF HIS MEN SERVE IN THE IRAQI ARMY
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AND OTHERS IN THE SYRIAN. HE SEEMED TO INDICATE THAT THE
IRAQIS MADE MORE OF AN EFFORT TO CULTIVATE THE TRIBE,
NOTING THAT MANY OF THE TRIBESMEN SERVED AS OFFICERS IN
THE IRAQI ARMY.

2. A NON-JABOUR, LIFELONG FRIEND OF THE SHEIKH WHO WAS
PRESENT REMARKED IN AN ASIDE THAT MANY OF THE TRIBESMEN

WOULD WORK FOR THE GIGHEST BIDDER AND THAT SMUGGLING WAS AN ACCEPTED WAY OF LIFE FOR THEM. HE FELT THAT THE SYRIAN WATCHED THE TRIBE CLOSELY BUT, ULTIMATELY, THERE WAS LITTLE THEY COULD DO TO PREVENT SMUGGLING INCLUDING WEAPONS AND EXPLOSIVES IF THE INDIVIDUALS IN THE TRIBE CHOSE TO DO SO.

3. SYRIANS SEEM INTENT ON CURTAILING IRAQI-SPONSORED SUBVERSION AS WE FOUND TO OUR CHAGRIN MAY 9 WHEN BAGHDAD-BASED FSO TRAVELING TO SYRIA VIA FORDAN WAS REFUSED ENTRY OF HIS CAR BECAUSE IT BORE IRAQI TAGS. POLICE TOLD HIM THE REGULATION WERE DESIGNED TO CURTAIL FLOW OF EXPLOSIVES AND ARMS INTO SYRIA. EMBASSY HAD TO SET SPECIAL EXEMPTION FROM MINISTRY OF INTERIOR BEFORE CAR WAS PERMITTED TO CROSS BORDER. KUWAITI DIPLOMAT ALSO TOLD US THAT IRAQ AMBASSADOR COMPLAINED TO HIM THE HEAVY SYRIAN INTELLIGENCE ESCORT LITERALLY FOLLOWS HIM EVERY PLACE HE GOES.

4. NEVERTHELESS, EVEN WITH THE NOMADIC LIFE DISAPPEARING IN THE REGION, BORDERS STILL COUNT FOR LITTLE IN AREAS IN WHICH PARTIALLY UNSETTLED TRIBES PREDOMINATE, AND THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR REGIMES TO EMPLOY THEM FOR SUBVERSION ARE THERE.
PELLETREAU

NOTE BY OCT: (#) AS RECEIVED, CORRECTION TO FOLLOW,

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